

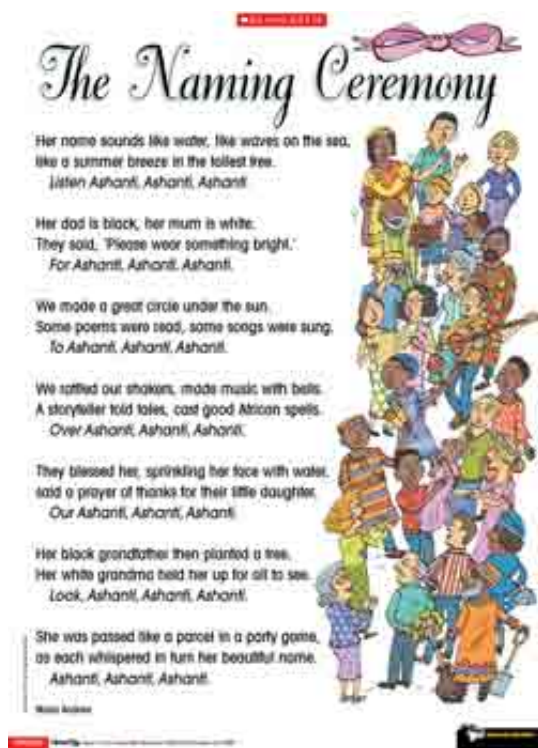
The Naming Ceremony

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By **Moira Andrew** — Poet and Author

After Moira Andrew attended baby Ashanti's naming ceremony, she was inspired to write this poem. The ceremony combined elements from two different cultures – Ashanti is a Ghanaian name – to create a beautiful and memorable event.

It would be helpful if, before using this poem, young readers had some awareness of poetic devices, especially onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance and refrains.



Shared teaching and learning

Before reading

- List the following words on the board and read them aloud together: *wash, splash, shush, whoosh, swish, brush*. Discuss the common sound, *sh*, and how and what it might be describing – water, wind, sweeping.
- Remind the children that such words are onomatopoeic: sounding like the action. Introduce the poem, explaining it makes great use of sounds.
- Write the name *Ashanti* on the board and ask the children to read and repeat it a number of times. Ask them, as you read the poem, to imagine they are guests at the ceremony.

Shared reading

- Display the poster and read the poem aloud, asking the children to join in each line of the refrain, in quiet voices. Practise the rhythm of *Ashanti, Ashanti, Ashanti* before you begin.
- Identify similes in the opening stanza to which Ashanti's name is compared: *water, waves, wind*. Compare words from the list on the board with Ashanti's name. Explain how the poet links such words through our subconscious (the back of our minds) to inform us of the sound effect.

Further reading

Moira Andrew Author Profile (<http://education.scholastic.co.uk/resources/4436>)

Authors and Letters (<http://education.scholastic.co.uk/content/2150>) (*Literacy Time PLUS* Ages 7 to 9, March 08, No 58). On-screen author study resource focusing on Moira Andrew, including some of her poems and stories accompanied by the author's personal notes.

Visit Moira's own website at **www.moiraandrew.com** (<http://www.moiraandrew.com>)

- Highlight the end rhymes and explain how each stanza is a rhyming couplet.
- How important is sound in this ceremony? Underline phrases relating to sound: *poems read, songs sung, rattled ... shakers, music ... bells, whispered*.
- Read aloud: *She was passed like a parcel in a party game*. What effect does the repeated letter *p* have, as well as alliteration? *Lips coming together to form the _p* sound slows down the line, while their rhythmical positioning emulates the rhythm of passing the parcel. Mime passing a parcel. Compare the anticipation involved in the game with that of waiting to hold the baby.

Responding

- Work in two groups. Ask one, in soft, whispering voices, to repeat the name *Ashanti* in a slow, even rhythm. (You could use a metronome to maintain a regular pace.)
- Ask the other group to read the poem over the background chorus, timing the words to coincide with the Ashanti chorus. Alternatively, tape the Ashanti chorus and play it as a background to a performance of the poem.

Literacy Framework

See the Using this issue chart **[here](http://education.scholastic.co.uk/resources/64504)** (<http://education.scholastic.co.uk/resources/64504>) to identify the Learning Objectives covered by these activities, to track progression from Year 2 through to Year 5, and to identify links with Year 3 and 4 Literacy Planning Units.

- Share ideas to create an extra couplet, perhaps related to their reading of the poem, such as, *We read these verses, enjoying the sound / Rolling her name on our tongues, round and round: Ashanti*, etc.
- Identify the similes in the first and last stanza, underlining the word 'like'. Suggest other similes for the name Ashanti – such as, *like a rocking cradle*.

Group and independent activities

- Hand out copies of the activity sheet below. Invite the children to take turns to read the names aloud, repeating them, for a partner to listen to the sounds.
- In groups of five or six, use the first stanza and refrain of the poem as a model, sharing ideas to write a fresh couplet for each of their own names within the group. Point out that the rhythm will vary according to their names – eg, *Mark Mark Mark* will create a faster rhythm than *Ashanti*. Encourage the children to concentrate on rhythm and onomatopoeia, more than rhyme, working in end rhymes as they revise.
- Challenge children to learn how to spell *onomatopoeia* and *onomatopoeic*. Demonstrate how to break up the word: on-o-mat-o-poe-(like *poem* without the *m*)-ic / on-o-mat-o-poe-ia. Ask them to test themselves (look, cover, write, check).
- Find, read and compare other poems by Moira Andrew, looking especially at how she uses imagery.

Plenary

- Listen to groups performing their new poems, each child reading or reciting the couplet with their own name, and all joining in the chorus.
- Invite individuals to spell the word *onomatopoeia* orally.



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